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REMARKS

Claims 1 to 20 are pending in the present application. Claims 1, 2, 7, 8, 9, 14, 19 and 20 have been amended for which there is support in the specification, claims and drawings as originally filed.

Reconsideration of the Examiner's decisions and reexamination of this application are respectfully requested.

Replacement drawings:

In reviewing the present application, it was discovered that there is an error in Figures 5 and 7. The specification and claims indicate that the pairs of bit lines are alternately arranged on one side or the other of the sense amplifiers. As noted in paragraph [0029] of Applicants' specification:

In FIG. 5, the bit line pairs to be connected are alternately interchanged above and below every one horizontally aligned sense amplifier (SA). For example, a sense amplifier (SA) 10 is connected to an upper bit line pair 11, and on its right, a sense amplifier (SA) 12 is connected to a lower bit line pair 13, and further on its right, a sense amplifier (SA) 14 is connected to an upper bit line pair 15. The same applies to the others.

It is thus clear that Applicants' invention is directed to bit line pairs on only one side of each SA. However, Figures 5 and 7 show some of the sense amplifiers having pairs of bit lines arranged on both sides of the sense amplifiers. Accordingly, Figures 5 and 7 are modified to show the pairs of bit lines arranged in an alternating arrangement on only one side of each of the sense amplifiers. Replacement sheets are being provided for the Examiner's review and approval.

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Objections to the claims:

Claims 2, 3, 6 and 9 have been objected to by the Examiner as being dependent upon a rejected base claim but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Claim 2 has been amended by incorporating all of the limitations of claim 1 (the claim from which original claim 2 depended). Claims 3 and 6 depend, directly or indirectly from claim 2 and so do not need to be amended. Claim 9 has been amended by incorporating all of the limitations of 8 (the claim from which original claim 9 depended). Accordingly, claims 2, 3, 6 and 9 should be allowable.

The §102 rejections:

Claims 1, 4, 5, 7, 8, 11, 12, 14, 19 and 20 have been rejected by the Examiner under 35 USC §102(b) as being anticipated by Kubota U.S. Patent 5,383,159.

As shown in Kubota, each sense amplifier is connected to two pairs of bit lines. For example, sense amplifier 11 is connected to the /BL1, /BL0 bit line pair and the BL0, BL1 bit line pair. Moreover, only the sense amplifiers in each row (e.g., SA 11, 13) are aligned. Sense amplifiers in adjacent rows (e.g., SA 11, 12), which alternate in position, are not aligned but rather are staggered. So, for those sense amplifiers in Kubota that are aligned (again, e.g., SA 11, 13), there is no alternating arrangement of the bit line pairs with respect to these sense amplifiers since the bit line pairs are always on the same two ends of the sense amplifiers as is clearly shown in Figure 4 of Kubota.

Each of Applicants' independent claims 1, 7, 8, 14, 19 and 20 claim aligned sense amplifiers (or sense amplifiers in a line) wherein the bit line pairs are alternately arranged with respect to the sense amplifiers. For example, referring to Figure 5, sense amplifiers 10, 12, 14 are aligned. Then, sense amplifier 10 is connected to upper bit line pair 11,

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sense amplifier 12 is connected to lower bit line pair 13 and sense amplifier is connected to upper bit line pair 15. It can be seen that the bit line pairs are alternately arranged with respect to the sense amplifiers. Again, in Kubota, aligned sense amplifiers do not have alternately arranged bit line pairs.

In order to further clarify Applicants' claims, each of independent claims 1, 7, 8, 14, 19 and 20 have been amended to clarify "that there is only one bit line pair connected to each sense amplifier". This contrasts with Kubota wherein each sense amplifier has two bit line pairs.

In view of the preceding remarks, it is submitted that Kubota cannot anticipate Applicants' claims 1, 7, 8, 14, 19 and 20. Inasmuch as claims 4, 5, 11 and 12 depend from claims 1 and 8, and since claims 1 and 8 are believed to be allowable, then claims 4, 5, 11 and 12 should be allowable as well.

Allowable subject matter:

The Examiner's indication that claims 10, 13 and 15 to 18 are allowable is acknowledged.

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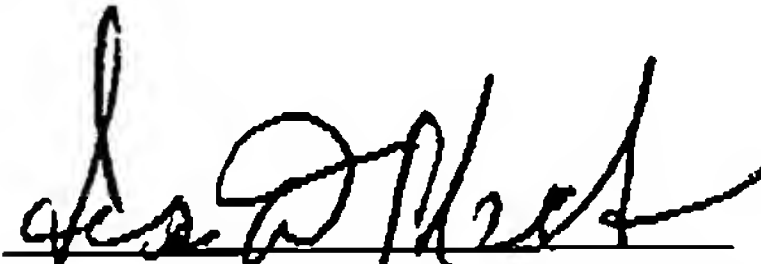
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Summary:

In view of all of the preceding remarks, it is submitted that all of claims 1 to 20 are in condition for allowance. If the Examiner finds this application deficient in any respect, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at the Examiner's earliest convenience to resolve such deficiency.

Respectfully Submitted,

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